1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

609 123 vastly relieved when he saw several boats pull up at the shore.

It appeared that these newcomers were also interested in our phonograph, but that no one would consent to be the first to sing, until at last a young boy came up.

609 123 971 "I'll sing for you," he said, and it was at once whispered that the boy came from a family of powerful obia men, that he was sure of his spirit. "I'll sing, yes, but you must let me tell the machine something first."

What he said was an invocation to his soul and his personal gods, and he spoke it by putting his face into the horn of the phonograph and talking in a rapid whisper, making audible the one phrase: "Bakra obia isn't my obia." Subsequently when we discussed this occurrence with older men, they made the matter clear to us. He had assured his spirits that he was not conceding anything to our magic, and that they were neither to feel slighted nor to relax their vigilance. The gods favored the strong and the proven, and a young man had to be careful, for the gods were not conceived as especially logical or rational or inexorably just, so that one had to guard against becoming the victim of their caprice.

609 123 Boat after boat pulled up at the shore, and up the road came a long line of callers. Women with infants straddling their backs, a breast drawn to the side so that the child might feed as it rested there; children with cords about their waists; young girls and boys, each with a square of apron across the front, or a loin cloth; and the men with togas and paddles, dignified and solemn, drawing nearer silently.

On our provision boxes sat those who had come early, particularly women nursing children, or old women who looked on with tired wonder. On the floor everywhere about our feet and against the posts sat the children we knew, while those who had come for the first time and were still fearful kept their distance, hiding behind some relative.

It was a great occasion, a spectacle of white man's magic, and they were there to verify it for themselves. Now there

1: Herskovits & Herskovits:-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

Chapter XVII

SARAMACCA OBIA

NO WORD of African orgin which has survived in the New World has taken on such grim meaning as has the word *obia* in many of the islands of the Caribbean. No Negro there will speak of it, and its practices and properties are secret. When obia strikes in the islands, it is usually a matter for the government, and the forms its vengeance knows too often take a grisly turn.

In the life of the Bush Negro, however, obia is everywhere, and its name the commonest of bywords, for among the Suriname Negroes obia is not black magic, or witchcraft, or sorcery. Black magic in the Suriname bush is *wisi*, and wisi is never confounded in the Bush Negro's mind with obia.

"Obia is good. Obia heals," they say in Suriname.

"Obia warns, obia protects."

"Obia protects a man against the force of a bullet, the thrust of an iron weapon, the dangers of fire."

"You want to know what obia is, Massa?" our cook asked one day. "We have this *komfo singi*—this priest's song:

> *"I am no master,*
> *And I am no slave,*
> *Yet when the masters come,*
> *They carry water for me."*

/12 cont./

796 Then they call all the neighbors together to take part in the
273 festivities to be held, which consist of invoking their gods amidst continuous dancing and excessive drinking.

They begin the festivities only on a Friday and usually finish on a Sunday or Monday, depending on the larger or smaller
[147] supply of drink, so, lacking this, the festival ends. After the conclusion they are usually extremely tired and listless and give themselves up entirely to rest for at least two or three days.

It is a definite requirement at these festivities to be very amply supplied with strong drink, because one must drink without
[782] interruption in order to remain in a continuous narcosis. With each drink they first pour a little on the ground, -- so that it, too, on which they find themselves so gay, may participate in their enjoyment.

[262] The merrymakers then take care that they will by no means
[577] be lacking in fish, wild game, bacon, rice, etc., since it is a matter of honor with them to display the most lavish hospitality on such occasions.

776 The gods that they worship are:

Loango Gado,
Papa Gado,
Cromantie Gado,

/13/ names certainly derived from the various African tribes of these names.

In the first two they glorify nature and everything created, from which it therefore appears that these are merely subordinate
[787] gods of the unnamed, single great spirit. The last is above all regarded by them as the mediator who transmits their wishes to the great spirit; he is invoked especially at burial ceremonies and for consultation in connection with serious illnesses.

796 They do not have any other cult or religion, so far as I was
[771] able to discover, but only the fixed habit of still celebrating to-
[132] gether and with their chief and captains on the first Friday of the new moon in the month of October or November, after the long
[783] dry period has set in for good, a great feast that has as its goal a general atonement, to cleanse them of the misdeeds that they have committed.

/37 cont./

583 591 (this was especially the case with the Afi and Toïna lineages cited above), that does not entail any compensation. It is contrary to custom and disapproved of, but if the wife absolutely insists on leaving her kin she is free to do it. Nothing can be claimed from her husband's lineage.

The usual interpretation of matrimonial compensation, regarded as a mechanism for exchange of women among groups, thus does not seem valid here. If a woman leaves a Boni lineage for good to go and found a family, for example among the Djuka, her descendants are lost to the lineage without any possibility of compensation. Yet this society so deeply rooted in African soil does not make provision for any allowance or payment in such a case.

613 791 [829] Things are clearer if the lineage is considered not as an effective material grouping but as a spiritual community subject to the same religious law. In the thought of the Refugee Blacks, the fundamental religious tie which joins the individual to his ancestors in uterine line cannot be broken whatever anyone does.

[591] [784] Wherever she may go, the emigrant woman remains a member of the spiritual community; she remains, she and her children, subject to the same kunu. Nor can this religious tie be transferred from the maternal kin group.

581 583 Understood thus, marriage breaks no spiritual tie, creates none; it thus affords no reason for any compensation.

000 These considerations show that the African "dowry" as conceived by patrilineal societies is not only a mechanism for the exchange of women among materially constituted groups. It can also have as its end, without those concerned even being aware of it, to compensate the spiritual community of the lineage for the loss of the children the woman will bear, their passage to another cult.

/61/

1937	Mission to determine the trijunction point of the frontiers of French Guiana-Brazil-Surinam.
1939	Declaration of war.
1944-45	Not a precise point of reference. The Boni confuse the liberation of the territory with the end of the war.
1948	First I.G.N. mission.
1949	Mr. Aubert de la Rüe's mission; second I.G.N. mission.
1952	Third I.G.N. mission. /blank page/ /63/

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The social institutions of the Refugee Blacks diverge noticeably from those of the African peoples from whom they issued. They do not include age grades, men's societies, or initiation; marriage involves neither a contract between kin groups nor "dowry."

In a general way these societies founded by rebel slaves who had retained an extreme horror of all oppression were organized so as not to have any material constraint weigh upon the individual. Their institutions are entirely founded on the idea of protection against suprahuman perils; the individual remains perfectly free, and he adheres /to these institutions/ only in proportion as he is conscious of these perils. The custom of the Refugee Blacks, devoid of any means of material coercion, tends to develop within the individual the feeling that he is constantly threatened,

/63 cont./
591 626 156 [961] that he can protect himself only by submitting to the law of the group. In this doubtless must be seen the deep reason for the importance attached to death and mourning, events around which is centered the activity of the usual societies and which entail a veritable mobilization.

626 971 It would be very difficult to condense the custom of the Refugee Blacks into a rigorous code. If one wished to do it, one would have to write as Article 1: "The living will conform to the will of the gods and the ancestors as it is expressed through the mouths of those possessed and by the movements of the bearers of the dead."

613 619 Each one of the tribes of the Refugee Blacks is formed of a certain number of matrilineages.

There is no limit on the number of these lineages, and it can be asserted that if any lineage whatever, detached from another tribe, asks to live in the midst of the Boni, it will be welcomed. From the first generation the children consider themselves as Boni.

In this regard one can cite the example of the Awara Bakka 3 lineage and that of the small lineage founded in Boniville by a Djuka woman, wife of Grand Man Ochi. All her descendants consider themselves Boni. /64/

[829] [643] But only the great lineages which constituted the tribe at its origin are social units recognized by the grand man, and only their heads are called to be members of the council.

128 We shall study first the interior functioning of the lineage, then the institutions going beyond the framework of the lineages.

/72 cont./

577 671 641 The morality of the Refugee Blacks knows in effect only obligations of a social and religious order. As for everything concerning material life, each one has the absolute right, one could even say the duty, to act as he sees fit, insofar as he does not wrong anyone else.

643 671 641 [156] If the grand man gave an order obliging someone to act against his own interest, for example if he wished to lower arbitrarily the price of boats, this order would be lawfully void. If the grand man has very great personal influence, he can persuade the Boni that it is to their interest to obey such a prescription, but in no case can his command have the effect of imposing by force an arbitrary order foreign to the social and religious tradition; the present grand man is weak in character to boot, sensitive to the influence of the Creoles and very little given to exerting any authority.

643 771 In reality, the office of grand man is above all religious. The grand man centralizes, if one may say so, the struggle against evil forces and watches ceaselessly over the welfare of the collectivity.

643 764 When a man dies, his near relatives come to report on the questioning of the yɔrka. Burial cannot take place until the grand man has made sure that all the prescriptions have been filled. People come to report to him again after the burial so that he can be sure that no suprahuman danger remains.

643 775 [782] The grand man has special power over the yɔrka (spirits) of the dead, which the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks place on a level intermediate between the human and the divine. When one of these yɔrka exerts against a lineage a vengeance (kunu) whose malignity goes beyond habitual bounds, the grand man beseeches it to stop; they allege that things go back to normal, at least for a time.

This power attributed to the grand man invests him, in the eyes of the Boni, with a suprahuman character. It is the very foundation of his political power.

/75 cont./

571 In fact, the society of the Refugee Blacks has not elaborated
771 true political institutions; it is essentially a grouping for collective
692 defense against suprahuman perils. The council, like the grand man, has power and authority only insofar as it remains closely bound to this function.

511 Absence of subordination. Among the Refugee Blacks no privileged
[565] class exists, /76/ and they all face life on a footing of rigorous equality; all receive the same education, must cultivate the soil,
[554] build their boats and houses, and live by paid work. The differences in standard of living observed from one to another stem basically from intelligence and work; and that, in spite of the belief in the possibility of getting rich by sorcery, is clearly understood by all.

565 Although the Boni willingly engage in paid work for one
[465] another in transportation by boat, there exists no tendency toward the formation of a class of rich people and one of wage-earners.
571 No servants exist among them, and one observes in their mutual
461 relations no exploitation of the weak. Neither does one observe that
[357] a rich man tries to have done by another, for pay, the customary
462 jobs he must carry out for the benefit of his wife (clearings, building of boats). This would be looked on with great disfavor. The grand
[643] man himself, if his grandson is not there to help him, goes himself to draw water from the river and he does it ostensibly, even though he has a constant concern for his prestige.

829 The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors are certainly at the base of this conception; for they have inspired in the Refugee Blacks a particular sense of human dignity which is not found to the same degree in Africa.

/190 cont./

428 178 A tendency which has appeared during recent years in connection with men consists in bequeathing during their lifetime the essential part of their property to the children they have raised.

613 [787] Inheritance of functions and powers. Upon the death of a lineage head, the yɔrka of the dead man is asked whom it wishes to see named. Then the council assembles to proceed with the nomination; it remains free in its choice, the will of the dead man beyond the grave does not have the force of law; but actually, it seems to be most often followed.

As for the function of captain which is common to all the fractions of one lo, the inheritance may pass from one fraction to another.

Ex.: for the Awara Bakka lo, the succession:
Asèmbay (Aw.B.2);
Pèèyon (Aw.B.1);
Kondoku (Aw.B.1).

000 /191/

CHAPTER VII

BELIEFS

Origin of the Beliefs of the Refugee Blacks

• 771 128 The spiritual life of the Refugee Blacks of the Guianas is intimately bound up with their social life, and the division we are obliged to make for the sake of clearness of the account is very often arbitrary. So we shall try to point out these connections wherever they are essential.

/191 cont./

What constitutes the religion of the Refugee Blacks is a synthesis of elements originating with various peoples of West Africa, especially the Ashanti, Agni, Mina, and Fon and also Congolese elements. This synthesis seems to have been born among the Saramaka, the first tribe formed at the beginning of the 18th century, and to have been adopted thereafter with modifications of detail by the Djuka, tribe created about 1760. The Boni, the last tribe formed, probably received these beliefs during the time of slavery which they spent under the tutelage of the Djuka, from 1815 to 1860. The beliefs of the Boni and those of the Djuka have an identical base; the rites and their effects on social life are exactly the same. Nevertheless, the Djuka, almost ten times more numerous, have been able to keep very differentiated conceptions and specialized cults, involving priests in the literal sense of the term.

The Boni have kept only the essentials, and many conceptions, especially the myths which serve as support for the whole tradition, are very much blurred among them.

The Boni like to imagine that Africans constitute only one nation, and that they have inherited in a lump the traditions and social forms of this nation. They know now (especially from having seen a good deal of the Senegalese riflemen of the 1937 French mission) that numerous tribes exist, but that has not shaken the veneration they have for Africa, source, for them, of all knowledge and all strength. However, almost nothing of the culture peculiar to each one of the great tribes has reached them; no name of an African nation has remained in their memory, and /192/ none of the languages of their land of origin has been kept (1); everywhere the vehicular language

1. One observes, however, that a certain number of disconnected details of African life have come down to them by oral tradition;

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[173] /192 cont./ thus it is that they have kept a rather exact description of the elephant (leu) and the gorilla (malẽ gwana).

[648] imposed on the slaves has prevailed. There is nothing surprising about that, since the slaveholders tried, in order to prevent revolts, to mix to the maximum the Blacks of the various tribes.

174 A certain number of men initiated in differing degrees
• 771 into African cults were among the rebels. They tried to conserve and transmit these rites, which their descendants have more or less transposed or deformed (2). As far as one can

[182] 2. The single fact that the vegetation and fauna differed totally from those of Africa immediately required a modification of ritual which called for infusions of leaves of numerous plants to which definite magical properties are attributed.

[198] As far as one can judge by the secret languages attached to these cults, in which are recognized many words deformed from the ordinary language, and a few Indian words, these cults in their present state must
[178] differ appreciably from the ones which gave them birth. In fact, the only thing the Refugee Blacks have authentically kept is concepts, metaphysical and moral ideas.

/192 cont./

791 This is precisely what constitutes the great interest of the
191 Refugee Blacks' religious forms, which one finds again, besides,
[177] in large measure, mixed with Christian ideas, among all the Blacks of South America. They seem to point out a very important common background of conceptions common to the West African civilizations.

791 It is certainly not by chance if the various tribes of
194 Refugee Blacks have adopted such close social and religious
184 forms. One must assume the action of several strong personalities who knew, with an almost superhuman instinct, how to sift out from the jumble of beliefs brought by the rebel slaves what was necessary to the life of the new society; but this new religion would not have taken root in forms so stable and so coherent if all had not been intimately conscious of being in agreement on a minimum of common concepts.

It is important to observe that the Refugee Blacks, who borrowed most of their techniques from the Indians and Europeans, remained rigorously faithful in their beliefs and rituals to the African substratum, from which they drew a homogeneous and
[177] living whole. Although the beliefs of the Indians are known to them in their main lines, they have borrowed almost nothing from them; on the other hand, it is certain that vague Christian recollections influenced the conception they have of the supreme god, Masa Gadu, and their moral and religious law. But they have been introduced into an African system of thought, and in fact the beliefs which directly influence individual and social life come in a straight line from the African earth.

792 Metaphysical conceptions. Through the rituals of the Refugee
[191] Blacks appear /193/ metaphysical conceptions very comparable to those which have been noted in the populations of West Africa.

6:Human--295 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SRS Bush Negroes SRS Boni

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792 The Refugee Blacks consider beings and things as distributed on several levels:

--The creator god;
--Lower gods;
--Ancestors;
--Men;
--Animals;
--Plants and inanimate things.

To each of these levels corresponds a level of life and a level of force (kaakiti). A higher force may act on a lower force, but not the reverse.

• 771 One may say that the cults of the Refugee Blacks have as their goal to capture the vital force of the gods and the ancestors and to bring it back to the level of men, giving them strength, luck, and fecundity. To thus increase one's vital force can be defined as good. Evil (negative magic, witi) is, on the contrary, to capture the vital force of another man in order to increase one's own.

754 The idea that one has wisimã is that he uses a higher force (especially an ancestor's yɔrkɛ) which he has succeeded in capturing by magic and in subjecting to his will in order to dominate someone else. Reduced to his own strength alone he could do nothing.

789 824 [792] The magic of the Refugee Blacks might allow one to believe that they think they act directly on men through the medium of plants to which magic virtues are attached. This would be a grave error; in their minds, animals and plants are placed at a lower level absolutely incapable of acting on man by itself. Plants are thought to act only insofar as they appear capable of attracting, of holding like storage cells, the vital force emanated from the gods.

/197 cont./

The rites of the worship of Odun are known only by the grand man and by an old man who replaces him when he travels. They are practiced only on the occasion of the collective oath against wisi, renewed every two or three years, and when it is necessary to implore Odun's mercy toward an offender. The officiant bathes the latter's body with a maceration of leaves that he alone knows.

To question Odun and know whether he pardons, they make use of a sacred object named afalaku, placed on a board put on the heads of two men. The answers yes and no are deduced by interpretation of the movements of the bearers, as in the interrogation of the dead.

The oath before Odun is also practiced as a legal test, permitting a man unjustly accused of theft or any misdeed whatever to justify himself.

Thus, in November, 1959, B... of Asisi, accused by two Djuka of being responsible for the burning of a large cabin /carbet/ in which objects of value were stored, asked to justify himself before Odun.

Odun's laws, which have the effect of forbidding violence, vengeance, and every form of oppression, give to the society of the Refugee Blacks a unique atmosphere of dignity and serenity which is not found to the same degree in animistic African societies. Most African societies censure sorcery and murder, but they accept vengeance and various forms of oppression. It is probable that the men who, two or three centuries ago, deep in the forests of Surinam, developed these laws, were inspired more or less consciously by Christian ideas; but they introduced them into an African system of thought, associating them with the idea of material sanctions in the present life, without which they would have been powerless.

6:Hurault--303 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni
Surinam SR4

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Odun's laws create an irreducible cleavage between the Refugee Blacks and the Creoles. The Creoles of Surinam, like the West Indian gold miners of the Maroni, profess Christianity, but they have a special conception of it, associating with Christian ideas /198/ beliefs of various origins and often magic practices. If in quasi-totality they reject magic aimed at doing harm without reason, they take very generally for granted:

--Counter sorcery inspired by vengeance;

--"Invocations" to the spirits of the dead and divers magic formulas in which it is believed one captures the vital force of these spirits in order to make practical use of it;

--Charms having the purpose of forcing the love of a person one desires.

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The Creoles are as attached to these conceptions as the Refugee Blacks to the laws of Odun, which are absolutely contrary to them. They have such importance in the thought of both that it would be unthinkable to make a group of Creoles and a group of Refugee Blacks live together for any appreciable length of time integrated into the same organization. Attempts made to do this, especially in Surinam, have always failed. When an economic activity engages them in the same work in the same locality, Creoles and Refugee Blacks form two separate groupings, each living according to its own law.

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If Refugee Blacks leave their group for any great length of time to settle in the midst of Creoles, if they do not come back periodically to renew the oath of Odun, it is taken for granted that they have abjured his laws and that they are suspect of wisi. It happens that people who have spent a whole portion of their lives in the midst of the Creoles come back to live in their native village because they are prey to adversity or sickness; they are always welcomed (the lineage cannot expel one of its members), but chances are great that they will be declared wisimã upon their death. This was especially the case with an

/198 cont./

167 754 old woman of 90, A..., who died in Asisi in January, 1957. Having lived with Creoles in her youth, she had come back to live in her native village for at least 30 years and had never given occasion for any unfavorable remark. Nevertheless, upon her death it appeared that she had wisi.

• 771 829 179 [779] Attitude toward Christianity. The Refugee Blacks, who are acquainted better than one might believe with the conceptions of the populations in the midst of whom they live, have a clear feeling of the relationship which exists between their metaphysical and moral conceptions and those of Christianity. They think they worship the same god as the Christians, in a completely different way but just as sound. They have no animosity whatever toward the Catholic and Protestant clergy, and most of them agree willingly to wearing crosses or medals. But they have not the least intention of abandoning their beliefs for that. They do not perceive the contradiction and do not understand that people might want to oblige them to choose.

851 171 165 797 [688] [273] [784] Like the Creole gold miners, they attach great importance to baptism, considered as an obia protective against the dangers of the bush. On Christmas, 1957 they were strongly impressed by the accidental death of a Djuka Christian living at the Kotika school. He refused to observe mourning for his wife according to the custom of the Refugee Blacks, and used to go to drink in the cabarets of the Creole villages. On Christmas evening, when drunk, he drowned himself. That was attributed to a suprahuman punishment. We heard /199/ the following reflection on this subject: "He was baptized and he drowned himself just the same. That is therefore not worth the trouble."

61 581 591 Actually, the matrilineal structure of the Refugee Blacks and their conception of marriage form an irreducible cleavage, which appears immediately as soon as one leaves the metaphysical conceptions to pass to the plane of practical living.

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581 The Refugee Blacks change their attitude immediately as soon as one speaks to them about marriage. Men and women are unanimous in considering marriage as an intolerable violation of individual freedom and as a tie without purpose; they talk about it with veritable indignation, even having the feeling of an offense against morality.

Cults of Possession

787 794 The phenomena of possession are extremely frequent [171] among the Blacks of America (possession by saints or inspiration by the Holy Spirit among the Blacks of Brazil and the United [171] States, voodooism in Haiti). With the Refugee Blacks they make up the very base of religious life to the point of being the normal means of communication between the gods and men; they have profound effects on all social life.

The cults of possession practiced by the Refugee Blacks of Guiana differ from those of the Blacks of Brazil and Haiti and do not appear to be directly connected with the African cults which have been described.

[128] We shall give here only very concise information about the ritual of these cults and we shall mainly try to show their place in relation to the institutions of the Refugee Blacks, and their functioning.

787 Possession is believed to be the entrance into a man of a suprahuman entity (divinity, spirit of an ancestor) which, during a variable length of time generally rather short (a few minutes to several hours), uses the body of this man and expresses itself through his mouth. They say that the man has become the horse - hasi - of the divinity. They also say: "Such-and-such a divinity entered his head." The possessed person is called [114] gadu mã (gadu umã for a woman). This word has been translated improperly as "priest" in the first works treating of the Refugee Blacks.

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787 784 If someone has a Kumẽnti, certain objects used in the cult: pestle, mortar, machete, must not be raised near him. His gita "would rise" immediately. Likewise while he is eating, neither tiger nor gun must be mentioned. To prevent their gita from rising, those concerned may take the precaution of putting a small piece of wood behind the ear while they eat.

787 178 [771] [781] [484] [743] [755] These past years the cult of the Kumẽnti was clearly declining among the Boni, as was the whole of their religious life; every one, indeed, no longer thought about anything but earning money and was always traveling in order to do this, which made difficult the indispensable meetings and dances. On the other hand, cared for effectively when they are ill in the Maripasoula hospital, the Boni feel the cult of the Kumẽnti less necessary, of which the principal social function is to cure. So, while in 1948 we used to be present very often at manifestations of the gita of Kumẽnti, in 1952 they were becoming much rarer and more secret /modest/. They were tending to fall to the level of the latent manifestations of which we shall speak further on. In 1956 we did not observe in the course of the forest [346] work any spontaneous attack of this gita. The chapels dedicated to the Kumẽnti are scarcely maintained and are falling into ruins; such is the fate of the gods judged benevolent toward men.

[751] Nevertheless people continue to lay great store by the ɔbia of Kumẽnti, especially the man nẽgge ɔbia which protects against the machete and the gûn, and the Kumẽnti bui, ring of Kumẽnti, instrument of divination.

776 [823] [787] The Bũnsuŋki. The Bũnsuŋki are gods which live in the waters, by preference at the head of falls, beside rocks bearing copses of detached trees; they can also reside ordinarily in these trees themselves. They appear sometimes in dreams to men as well as to women in the aspect of Indians, more commonly Indian women with long hair. This is why they are sometimes called wata Inẽi, Indians of the water.

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787 789 [114] in their hands and utter adjurations. We saw this rite performed in 1949 but without being able to observe the exact details.

787 791 The frequency of the phenomena of possession and the importance accorded to them imprint a remarkable character on the religious life of the Refugee Blacks: all these manifestations have for each one the character of obvious material fact. How, then, doubt that one lives with the gods, sees them, and [197] speaks to them? Because of this fact the society of the Refugee Blacks is utterly impermeable to European influences.

787 824 Some plants utilized in the rites of possession. The preparations with which the possessed people "wash" their bodies consist of macerations of leaves. The plants used, which for the most part belong to the secondary flora which develops in the old clearings, are very numerous. However, some are regarded as [789] having a very unique power. The first five especially are utilized by all the Boni to "wash off the Ampuku" when they have slept a night in the bush.

Aluku Name	Identification (1)	Use
[122]	1. Identification by Mr. Hoock, botanist connected with the Institut français d'Amérique tropicale (IFAT) in Cayenne.	
Lebi katu	cotton	cult of the Ampuku
Konopo wiwi	Ayenia atrorubens (Sterculiaceae)	---- /216/
Foo kiki	Tiaridium indicum (Boraginaceae)	----
Sume wiwi	Ocimum sanctum (?) (Labiaceae)	----

/218 cont./

794 995 The yɔrka. (The Boni say yɔɔka, the Djuka and the Creoles of Surinam yɔrka.) The expression yɔrka is used only to designate the spirits of the dead. But of course the elements of the yɔrka are present in the living man. /219/

794 828 /219/ The yɔrka is the ordinary consciousness of the man, his memories, tastes, aversions, all that constitutes his personality. All that, for the Refugee Blacks, does not come from the divine plane but at least in part from former human existences, and after death will not reach the divine plane. The Refugee 995 Blacks seem to believe that after death, the yɔrka remains unchanged, will keep the same desires, the same aversions, the same thoughts; it is simply no longer in ordinary life, it has passed to another plane, intermediate between the divine and the human, from whence it continues to remain in a certain fashion in contact with men. The various informants we questioned on this subject declare that they have no idea of the fate of the yɔrka after death, of its place with respect to the divinities, of the rewards or punishments of which it may be the object according to the manner in which the man lived. These are questions they never ask themselves openly and which hardly interest them, all their interest being centered on earth- [154] ly life. The idea of a paradise is absolutely foreign to them; they acknowledge however in the case of the wisimã that they will be stripped of the force that every living being receives from the divine, and that thus destroyed as beings, they will no longer be more than empty shadows.

969 The gaã yɔrka, spirits of the ancestors, are believed to watch over their descendants and are subject to worship.

[997] Ancestor worship. Among the Refugee Blacks, ancestor worship is intimately bound up with all the acts of family and social life. They assume that the yɔrka of the ancestors are always present near their descendants and that they protect them. It is through them as intermediaries that the force emanated by the divine is received by the living.

/229 cont./

784 613 672 the Afi lineage to be thrashed symbolically for not having paid sufficient attention to the warnings of the yɔrka which had already made Kotoïda sick several times: by their negligence they bore part of the responsibility for Kotoïda's death. Although the Afi and the Awara Bakka live together and regard themselves as members of one community, there was no question whatever of thrashing the Awara Bakka, and that because, not being subject to the same kunu, they bore no responsibility for this death. /230/

Likewise it is taken for granted that the descendants of Anèta (Aw.B.3) do not share the legal responsibility of the Awara Bakka proper (fractions 1 and 2). The fact that Anéta was the wife of Pééyon, captain of the Aw.B., and that her descendants are completely integrated into the life of the village, does not modify this legal situation at all. At the time of the brawl between the Dipélu and the Awara Bakka in 1948, the Aw.B.3 were not taken to task, any more than the members of the Afi lineage.

• 791 The relations of the Boni with the entities which are believed to pursue them are most interesting. They seek only to appease the divinity, to calm it provisionally, and to live with it in a state of armed peace, if one may say so.

784 787 When divination has shown that a certain calamity was due to the kunu (sometimes the divinity in question reveals it immediately, through the mouth of its bearer, before being interrogated), it is asked why it struck: it always indicates a precise reason: usually it appears to be inspired by arbitrariness [776] and a pitiless despotism. The Refugee Blacks are not surprised at this, for thus it is that they imagine the lower gods.

784 787 776 In 1948, A..., of the Dju lineage, fell ill; he felt violent pains in his legs. Divination showed that it was the doing of the Kāntamasu, which was exercising its kunu upon

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776 which people do not hesitate to come to ask for remedies or
787 opinions, in spite of the evil they have done to the lineage and perhaps will do tomorrow. It is even allowable to wonder whether people do not prefer to consult the most wicked divinities, for they are believed to be stronger.

784 The kunu focuses, turns aside toward high purposes the
771 blind forces of superstition, fear, and rancor. Several authors
114 who have written on the Refugee Blacks have stated that
754 calamities were almost unfailingly attributed to sorcery (wisi). This is a grave error due to the fact that they believed they could transpose to the Refugee Blacks what is observed among the Creole populations of Surinam. If this were true, no
[787] positive social bond could exist. We believe we can assert that among the Refugee Blacks divination lays the blame on
784 sorcery in only scarcely a tenth of the misfortunes. Here,
[114] among other examples, are several typical cases concerning Boni who worked with us or whom we have known especially well:

[753] --In 1948, Fintiman (Dju) falls ill (violent pains in the
[776] legs); kunu of a Kãntamasu.

[752] --In 1948, Galmo (Papaïston) is accidentally hurt (gun backfire): kunu.

[753] --In 1949, Diolè, captain of the Dju lo, is smitten with
[761] hemiplegia and remains paralyzed. He dies in 1951: kunu
[776] of a Papa gadu.

761 --In 1950, a Saramaka is killed in a hunting accident (a gun in poor condition went off by itself): ɔ̃ŋgɔ́ɔku (accident).

[754] --In 1951, Kanayen (Kotika) drowns while sailing at night on the river: wisi.

[784] --In 1951, Loka (Dju) dies at the age of 70: kunu of an
[776] Ampuku.

752 --In 1951, F... (Dju) is seriously hurt by the falling of
784 a branch while cutting his clearing: kunu of a yɔrka.
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/257 cont./

842 976 A few weeks afterward she found herself pregnant, and it seemed obvious to all that this was the doing of a Wata Ingi.

845 No magic power is attributed to the tone pikin, any more than special mental or physical characteristics. But it is assumed that they are the object of a special protection, and that they cannot be harmed with impunity.

771 789 435 The sacred character of payment. Relations between the gods and men always have the character of a bargain, among the Refugee Blacks: an irritated divinity is never appeased by repentance or good will; it requires that it be paid; likewise, an obia is of value only for the person who has paid for it. Refugee Blacks will never utilize ready-made magic recipes: uttering certain words, making certain gestures; face to face with such a recipe they will ask immediately: "From what [812] god does this obia come, and whom must one pay?" It seems that in their conception every transference of a spiritual power or a magic force disturbs something in the proper functioning of the universe; payment restores this equilibrium, it is the [711] mark of legitimacy. Some Creoles of African ancestry transpose the same idea with respect to Christianity, and this is /258/ why they insist so much on paying for masses and buying 759 558 "orisons" (1). One observes likewise that free medical care

1. Written prayer to which is attached protective power. This notion, borrowed from the rustic magic of 17th-century France, seems to have been introduced into Guiana by the first European colonists.

lowers the prestige of the doctor in the eyes of all.

/258 cont./

776 823 778 One of the best known of these gods is that of the Maruini. It is assumed to control all the tributaries of the Maruini as far as their sources. Its place of worship is a thicket situated downstream from the dangerous Kubi Sula Falls, at the mouth 782 of the river. Before starting to go upriver in August, 1956, [539] the crews of our three boats, in an atmosphere of great meditation, lined up behind the eldest of them, who made the offering of water and tafia, uttering these words: "God who commands this river, watch over us, keep us from being sick, let no accident happen to us; if there is on this river an interdiction which we do not know (2) and which, through

2. It is obvious here that this is a case of de facto worship of a divinity about which nothing is known.

ignorance, we do not observe, pardon us. Bring us back to our villages safe and sound." The boatmen came one after the other to make the offering of tafia. The scene lasted more than a quarter of an hour. This ceremony was not without nobility, engendering belief in that sincere fervor of animists so often mentioned in the /259/ ethnographic literature.

● 771 But our return at the end of our work trip took place in a completely different atmosphere, showing the strictly practical and utilitarian side of the religion of the Refugee Blacks. Once past the Kubi Sula, the three boss boatmen could not persuade any of their men, who were in the act of eating their meal, to accompany them as far as the place of worship to thank the god. Some told us straight out that they were scoffing at this god from now on, having no intention of [782] coming back on the Maruini. As for the boss boatmen themselves, they measured stingily the quantity of tafia offered

/259 cont./

771 [782] to the god, and their words of thanks lasted scarcely half a minute (1). At the time of our first trip on the Maruini, in

1. Yet custom expressly provides for this rite of thanking.

1948, the same scenes had unfolded, going as well as coming back.

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Rites Relative to Agriculture

These rites occupy a relatively minor place in the religious life of the Refugee Blacks, which may be attributed to the great regularity of the climate and the absence of calamities affecting the yield of crops.

[613] It does not seem, at least among the Boni, that a religious bond is assumed between the lineage and the land, and rites intended to insure the fertility of the soil are carried out by each one for himself in the neighborhood of his own field; the lineage head does not appear to play any particular role in this regard. In the thought of the Boni, the fertility of the soil depends upon a local divinity, to which is offered de facto worship; the temporary or permanent users of the lands situated in the domain of this god perform on their own behalf the rites of this worship without any distinction of origin, whether they are Boni, Djuka, or Saramaka.

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[796] [793] [643] The only collective worship existing in Boni country is the worship of mama gɔ̃ɔ̃, of which the grand man is priest. Its rites are limited to a short annual prayer.

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791 The Boni, as we have shown, do not feel that they are pagans. They think they worship the same god as the Christians, in a different way but just as valid; they feel that their moral principles are not inferior to those of the Christians, that they are expressed in practice by the same prescriptions and are in fact better obeyed(2).

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2. We report here faithfully the point of view of those concerned without making any judgment of its worth; let us recall that their principles of living do not assume any moral conscience in the individual and rest entirely upon the fear of material punishments in the present life. But even this base gives them great practical effectiveness.

829 Only in their conception of their kinship and the family, in the absence of family life based on the indissolubly united couple, do they recognize that they live under another law. But they do not fail to notice that the populations of the Guianas who profess Christianity hardly put it into practice in their family life: the stability of marriages is appreciably greater among the Refugee Blacks.

787 776 828 As for the cults of possession, the Boni feel that they worship de facto entities whose existence appears as tangible to them as light or weight to us. These ideas are bound up with a characteristic way of perceiving, touching deep zones of the mind which reasoning does not reach (3).

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3. Actually, it is observed in Black Africa that where cults